

Southeastern Conference Baseball Tournament

Friday, May 23, 2025

Hoover, Alabama, USA

Hoover Metropolitan Stadium

LSU Tigers

Coach Jay Johnson

Kade Anderson

Ethan Frey

Postgame Press Conference



Q. Ethan, you hit two huge runs in the first three innings and then the bats kind of go cold. What's the mindset that you and the other teammates have to have to keep going on?

ETHAN FREY: Just our aggressiveness. Sometimes it's easier to jump out there in the first inning. We haven't played in a week. Just gotta keep it in our mind to stay aggressive and be willing to compete, all nine, not just the first three or four.

Q. Kade, we haven't seen Anthony come out of the pen (indiscernible) long to give him the ball. What did it mean to you and what did you see from him?

KADE ANDERSON: Just full trust in him. When he's on the mound it's really hard to lose. It's what he does every week. No one's shocked by that. It's obviously nice for him to come in after me.

Q. Kade, what does an outing like that do for Anthony, that pressure moment to experience it in front of all this?

KADE ANDERSON: I think he's done it all year. He's a really clutch pitcher, and when you have to make the good pitches, he makes them. And that's a really good attribute in a pitcher. It what helps me continue to grow as a pitcher as well, learning from him.

Q. Kade, you talked this week about being intentful with your pitches. How do you think you worked that in tonight?

KADE ANDERSON: Really just the same as every week and continuing to throw every pitch with intent. And full faith in Coach Yeskie and what he calls. And I think that's the reason for the success.

Q. What's it like to have a catcher like Hernandez (indiscernible) commanded to your pitching staff and let alone what you utilized with your pitches tonight and just flaming 12 guys?

LSU - 4, Texas A&M - 3

JAY JOHNSON: Great college baseball game. Congrats to Texas A&M. They made a very good run here they have a talented team. And it took our best to win tonight, clearly.

And our best is these two guys here. Kade Anderson, the best pitcher in the country -- I'll give him the tied for first with Anthony Eyanson. And Ethan Frey, just a spectacular hitter. This is what our program is all about, these two guys. They're great players but even better human beings. The only way to get through this thing is talent and character, and I'm lucky to have these two on my team.

I guess we have some rain coming in tomorrow night. The schedule is condensed. We're playing a team we haven't played. So I have a long night ahead of me tonight.

Q. Kade, I think it was eight strikeouts in your first nine batters what was really rolling for you early on in the game?

KADE ANDERSON: Just believing in Coach Yeskie. And I have full faith in our coaches to continue to go out there and make pitches. And when you succeed, that's what happens.

Q. How much do you all feed off the energy, what sounds like Alex Box out there -- 12,000, 13,000 plus LSU fans out there?

ETHAN FREY: Alex Box is a huge home field advantage. When you play in an environment like Alex Box and then you come here it feels the same. There's no difference. It feels amazing. Our fans get into it and we love it.



KADE ANDERSON: When I throw a pitch in the dirt I know he is going to block it. It's such a good feeling.

Coach Johnson did a great job recruiting him, a guy from Puerto Rico that had a difficult time adjusting to what it was like in the United States. He's really done a good job, and I trust him with my life back there.

Q. Ethan, I think your home run was on an 0-2 count. What's your approach heading into that pitch, really, when you're trying to battle but you got something you could drive?

ETHAN FREY: When it comes to 0-2, just try to put a barrel on something. If I hit it hard or don't, drive the pitch count is kind of our main thing once we get two strikes. You have to raise the pitch count, take care of the starting pitcher, whoever is in the bullpen. Anytime I can get a free pitch like that, I'm pretty thankful for it.

Q. Ethan, you've been through a lot in your time at Baton Rouge. What's it mean tonight to essentially have the game-winning two-run run?

ETHAN FREY: I'm from Louisiana, so this means a little different to me as I'm sure it does Kade. Long, hard time in college, but we have such a great coaching staff and training staff that I couldn't do nothing but trust every single one of them.

It makes it really easy when we have as good of coaches as we do. To have their faith in every time I get in the box, every game, it helps a lot.

Q. Ethan, A&M's left-handed pitching made it tough on you all when you played them earlier this month. How important was it for the right-handed hitters like yourself to produce tonight?

ETHAN FREY: I wouldn't say right-handed producers. We had -- Derek Couriel had a couple of great at-bats in there. We had a lot of great barrels that just happened to go right to somebody.

So, I mean, Coach says you're never facing opponent, you're facing the ball. But it felt kind of good beating them tonight, getting our payback on them. But, again, it's just baseball. So stuff like that can happen every now and again.

Q. Was the plan always to pitch Anthony in relief today? And does he pitch again this weekend?

JAY JOHNSON: Yeah, it was the plan. I decided last Saturday that this is what we were going to do if the game

dictated that. There's a number of reasons for that. He will not be available for the rest of the weekend.

Q. You guys hadn't played in about just a week, and now you're taking on a team that's played here already. What was it like to come out, set the tone early from your offense?

JAY JOHNSON: I thought it was a great first inning. My man comes out here and punches out the side in the first inning. Can't get off to a better start than that.

And Derek, great at-bat. I think it was, like, seven or eight pitches. And two-strike double. Then Jared does a good job of managing the zone, drawing the walk. Danny gets the bunt down. Ethan doesn't try to do too much, drives it to the outfield, which would have been a sac fly but it's good it fell down there.

And Luis putting the ball in play to the middle of the field which we call a gray area.

I thought that was a great start. We got the lead-off guy again and hit into a double play in the second inning. But then Danny hit a ball hard and low. I think that was with two strikes too.

Then they were very worried about the running game there. The guy got distracted a little bit, left the pitch up and Ethan drove it, which he can do. I thought that was great.

And then they clearly did a good job after that on the mound. Freshcorn was really, really good tonight and you could see his improvement as a pitcher. But when you've got those two throwing, four is probably going to be enough.

Q. The stuff is apparent with Kade, but what do you see in the competitor? What is he like to work with and how has he impressed you this year?

JAY JOHNSON: He's amazing. We knew he had something special right when I was hired at LSU. A good friend of mine, Eric Borba, his son, Casey, he plays at Texas, and they played together a lot. He said, man, you need to get on the phone with this guy right now. And I did.

And from the first conversation, you could tell this guy was special. And then I watched him pitch. I was, like, man we're going to have a hard time getting this guy through the draft.

Had Tommy John at the end of his junior year. And the



way he handled that to get himself back, and then had a good freshman season last year, kind of flew under the radar a little bit. Kind of protected him coming back from the injury.

But then he crushed it in the offseason. The weight room piece, he's much more physical than he was at this time last year. He's added his pitch repertoire. And he throws them all for strikes all the time. It's velocity, it's movement, it's location. It's any pitch in any count.

And he's a winner. Both these dudes right here, I meant what I said. Hopefully caught somebody's attention. Like this dude and this dude is who I want LSU to be, LSU baseball to be about and to be known for. And Kade certainly has got that great character.

Q. You talked about it earlier, your mentality and the familiarity with A&M going into today versus going into Ole Miss tomorrow when you have never seen them before. What is that -- how do you prepare for that? And what was that like postgame message and message you're going to send to your players going into it tomorrow?

JAY JOHNSON: First thing I'm going to do, I'm going to get Dunkin' Donuts, get a little bit of caffeine and sugar. I came to the game Wednesday night knowing it was a possibility to play them and wanted to eyeball it.

Certainly familiarity with their team from playing them forever. And they're better this year. They're a really good team this year, and it's a great win that they got today on one of the best teams in the country.

So we'll get ready for that. The players need to go to sleep and get rested. It's a quick turnaround with the weather change and the game time. It's just what you do this time of year, and you love doing it.

And the messaging after the game was twofold. Number one, it's a great exercise for our team. I want them to enjoy and celebrate every win because they're really hard to get. But that has to expire quicker when you're in postseason play because you have to be prepared for tomorrow. So that was the first thing.

I just sent them a little challenge, like the four teams left are four of the last five national champions. Let's get after it and see if we can be the champion of the champions.

Q. Laviolette had surgery last night and played today. Have you ever seen something like that?

JAY JOHNSON: No. And who knows what's going to

happen with the bracket and where they're at. But if that's the last time I have to play against Jace, I'm going to be very happy about that. And he's a great player. Much like these guys, he's a great human being.

And that's special. To get on the field tonight after that, that's special. And massive hat tip and massive respect to him.

Q. I asked Ethan this, but what he had been through at LSU, to battle back and be so clutch this season, what's he meant to you?

JAY JOHNSON: I mean, that is a real dude. I mean, great player. He's an even better person. The only reason he didn't play as a freshman is because he's on one of the best teams in college baseball history. That's it. That's the only reason he didn't play as a freshman.

Last year it was getting close to kind of like, go. Literally the moment I decided to do that, he slid back into first, hurt his shoulder bad enough to have surgery on it. It took some time to get back from it. There was a feeling very early in the year to get to our best team it would obviously include him.

Kind of reminds me of '23 a little bit, like there was some guys, like Beloso and Joe Barrett (phonetic) that weren't in the lineup every day, but I had a feeling we'd get to that. And we did. Obviously we know how that turned out. He was kind of that guy this year.

But never has complained, never has whined or never said, "Poor me." He's shown up with the right attitude, great work, and he's obviously very talented. And we're all seeing the results of that right now.

Q. You said that you watched Ole Miss a little bit on Wednesday, but going into this game and Ethan not hitting or anyone getting more runs after Ethan's home run, what are some adjustments, if any, that you'd like to see from this offense going into the game especially after seeing Ole Miss?

JAY JOHNSON: I don't know who they're going to pitch tomorrow. I haven't decided who we're going to pitch tomorrow. I'll save y'all a question with that.

I think it comes down to just executing your plan this time of year. I had Alex Bregman talk to the team. On the outside, I'm very thankful for all of you that promote college baseball and you need narratives and storylines. Winning this time of year comes down to executing your plan, and I think at times we've done that about as good as anybody.



I mean, this team has played at times about as good as any team I've ever had. When you go through the league like this, some of these pitchers make it tough. Miles Patton is one of those guys that makes it tough. And Freshcorn, he didn't even pitch against us in that series.

Drafted -- I don't know if he's draft eligible or not, but he's getting drafted after that tonight. I think kind of get them reset.

And when you have a good team, one player doesn't always have to be perfect. So I think that takes some pressure off and just need to get them a little more locked in on taking the at-bats that they're capable of. And I thought we were unbelievable through three innings of that and we can get back to that tomorrow.

Q. At the beginning of the season, we talked about Anthony. It was at the beginning of his start he might struggle a little bit but he'll get better as he goes. Tonight, he couldn't have that, though, right, it was a one-run game. He had to be on point as soon as he got in. How does this demonstrate his improvement?

JAY JOHNSON: We're way past that. It's kind of a thing, I made a joke with him five weeks ago that I was going to go make a mound visit in the bullpen when he was warming up for the game to try to get him over that hump. But that dude, I'm telling you, he's the best at a few things.

Number one, he is the best at getting better as the game goes along, and he's the best pitcher in the country at wiggling his way out of trouble. The odds of getting out of a runner on third, no-out situation without a run scoring, are very low.

And it takes a competitor, a special dude like that, to do it. And he's the man.

Q. Why the intentionality to get him time tonight?

JAY JOHNSON: I figured somebody would ask me that. So just looking at what we're trying to do as a team. We have asked a lot out of those two guys. And they are the reason that we are sitting here. They're the reason we're not getting on an airplane to go play from this point forward.

So I felt like this was a good week to kind of minimize what we asked of them and their load to get them fresher and better for next week. That was the first thing.

The second thing was, we now have the option to do whatever we want next Friday. And when you don't know who your opponent is, you want to have the option to

choose. And I have that option because I have two pitchers as good as that.

Number three, I wanted to play more than one game here. And I think the only way you get better as a team is to play. And all that's left is teams that are capable of going to Omaha and winning the national championship. So what an opportunity for us to get better this week.

The next thing is we're going to need more than those two guys. So now this is going to thrust a few guys into pitching well against teams that are capable of winning the national championship, which will thus make us better as we move forward.

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